FD-350 (Rev. 7-16-63)

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Schott Thinks Hoover May Have OK'd Destruction Of Lee Harvey Oswald's Threat Letter to FBI

By JOE SCHOTT
Vice President, Associate Editor of The News-Tribune

Lee Harvey Oswald came alone to the FBI office on the 12th floor, 114 Commerce St., Dallas, in early November, 1963, after Special Agent James Hosty had talked to Oswald's wife Marina about a routine security matter at Mrs. Ruth Paine's house in Irving.

Oswald had a letter addressed to Hosty which he gave to one of the office employees and then left. The way I heard the story a few weeks later was that in the letter

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

1 News Tribune
Ft. Worth, Texas

Date: 9/5/75
Edition:
Author:
Editor: Mack Williams
Title:

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: Dallas
89-43-4577
☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED ___ INDEXED ___
SERIALIZED ___ FILED ___

SEP 10 1975
FBI-DALLAS

VISIT OF OSWALD TO DALLAS OFFICE

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Sent Bureau by facsimile 9/9/75

Oswald threatened to kill Hosty if Hosty attempted to talk to Marina again.

This letter was supposedly read by Ken Howe, Hosty's supervisor, and by Hosty. Hosty, a veteran FBI agent, was not unduly upset by the letter. He tossed it into his work box with a lot of other unfinished business. The letter was supposedly still in the box on the day that President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

I don't know what happened to the letter. I don't know whether Gordon Shanklin, the Dallas special agent in charge at the time, knew about it — before or after the assassination. I know that a lot of people in the Dallas office knew about it — after the assassination.

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I'M VERY GLAD this incident is finally in the public domain. Keeping it a secret has bothered me for a long time.

To me, it is a strong refutation of the conspiracy theory of the Kennedy assassination. A party to a complicated conspiratorial plot to assassinate the President just would not have acted the way Oswald did. His coming alone to the FBI with his threatening note, just before the assassination date, marks him for what he was—an arrogant, irrational and dangerous loner.

But the letter, although missing, is still working its confusing mischief.

Gordon Shanklin, who was to become one of the major figures in the Kennedy assassination investigation, was transferred to Dallas as SAC from Honolulu sometime earlier in 1963. He was a large, rumpled man who smoked cigarettes so constantly and carelessly he occasionally set his neckties on fire.

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SHANKLIN WAS to say later that during his two or three year stay in Honolulu he received two or three long distance telephone calls from FBI Headquarters in Washington. After Nov. 22, 1963, however, he often got two or three an hour.

Shortly before noon on that fateful Nov. 22, Shanklin was working alone in his office when a male clerk hurried in carrying a small transistor radio squawking with the news that President Kennedy had just been shot by a sniper near the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas.

Shanklin immediately dialed J. Edgar Hoover personally in Washington and Hoover relayed the news at once to Robert Kennedy, Attorney General and brother of the President, at his McLean, Virginia, estate.

Two results of that fast phone call were that Director Hoover was able to perpetuate his mythical image of being all-seeing and all-knowing, and Shanklin was catapulted high in Hoover's esteem.

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THE LETTER incident was revealed to the public just this last weekend in a story in the Dallas Times Herald. A day or so later the Houston Chronicle got into the act with a copyrighted story quoting Jesse Curry, Dallas chief of police in 1963, alleging that FBI and Dallas police officials suppressed for at least five months a statement made by Hosty shortly after learning Oswald was in police custody, a statement that Oswald was "capable of assassinating President Kennedy."

Was this Hosty statement, if made, based on his having read Oswald's letter? Probably.

Hosty, still on duty with the FBI in Kansas City, refuses comment. Shanklin, who retired from the FBI in Dallas a couple of months ago to join a law firm, denies he told Curry to suppress any statement.

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THE ARGUMENT between Curry and Shanklin is more far-reaching than a mere disagreement between two Dallas law enforcement officials.

If Curry is right, then Hosty probably made the statement that Oswald was capable of assassinating President Kennedy based on the threat contained in the prior letter.

Thus, if the statement was actually made, any request to suppress it had to be made with the knowledge of the existence of the letter and such a request would not originate with Shanklin. He had many virtues as SAC, but independent thinking was not one of them. He checked with the Bureau on everything.

Any request by the FBI to suppress any statement could have come from only one person — J. Edgar Hoover.